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ABSTRACT

This book unites speech act theory and conversation analysis to advance a theory of conversational competence, called the Dynamic Speech Act Theory (DSAT). In contrast to traditional speech act theory that focuses almost exclusively on intuitive assessments of isolated, constructed examples, this theory is predicated on the assumption that speech act theory, if it is to be of genuine empirical and theoretical significance, must be embedded within a general theory of conversational competence capable of accounting for how we do things with words in naturally occurring conversation; it can usefully be seen as a synthesis of traditional speech act theory, conversational analysis, and artificial intelligence research in natural language processing. A variety of naturally occurring conversations are analyzed and presented within a framework of computational interest and Discourse Representation Theory. In particular, an explicit mapping is offered of semantic and pragmatic meaning features and politeness features into so-called conventionalized indirect speech act forms. The book is divided into the following sections: (1) the nature of speech acts; (2) meaning and force; (3) the structure of communicative interactions; (4) interactional effects; (5) indirect speech acts; (6) conventions of use; (7) the structure of conversation; and (8) utterance generation. (NAV)

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